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This report describes the setting, implementation, and findings of an experiment in educational telecasting of 17 one-hour lectures, a course for college credit in lower division health education. Units included (1) quackery, (2) self-diagnosis, (3) preventive medicine, (4) syphilis and gonorrhea, (5) environmental health, (6) cancer, (7) heart disease, (8) arthritis and exercise, (9) cigarettes and health, (10) nutrition and obesity, (11) mental illness, (12) drug abuse, and (13) smoking and dental health. Over 2,000 students enrolled and an estimated 32,000 adults viewed the program each week. Findings included: (1) 72% of those taking the course were over 30 years of age; (2) 10% were under 21; (3) almost half of the enrollees completed the course; (4) 10% of those completing the course were public school teachers, 30% were homemakers, 24% were in full-time employment, and 70% were married. It was concluded that the course reached an entirely different segment of the population from the typical junior college class, and that the many visual aids not ordinarily used in classrooms (close-up charts, models, objects, professional artwork, and selective portions of films) accounted for the greater effectiveness of the cou"se. It was estimated that the college received over $200,000 worth of publicity in the form of promotional advertising time as a concomitant of the series. (RM)

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LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE

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OPEN CIRCUIT TELEVISION AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

During the past spring semester Long Beach City College enrolled 2,145 students in one class--a class that met at the unlikely time of 7:30 to 8:30 each Saturday morning. The class was, of course, shown over television on commercial station KABC-TV, Los Angeles, so the students did not come to the campus but learned in the comfort of their own homes. The course was a two-unit lower division health education course comprised of seventeen one-hour lectures and taught by Charles Rulon, one of the college's regular certified classroom professors.

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Long Beach City College, along with seventeen cooperating junior colleges, agreed to underwrite the development of the course as the second in a series of such courses offered in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Schools. The first series was produced by Pasadena City College during the 1967 fall semester and covered the history of art. Health Education was selected by the cooperating colleges as offering the greatest community service possibilities for the public as well as being a required course for the Associate of Arts degree (two-year college degree in California community colleges).

The course was offered through the cooperation of KABC-TV under the leadership of Mr. Kaslon Zoller, Production Manager. The station agreed to pay all the costs of production and promotion as part of their community service undertaking. Long Beach City College agreed to pay cost of the instructor, as well as other incidental costs of mailing and secretarial help. The Los Angeles County Schools printed copies of a brochure which were sent to over forty community colleges in Southern California, to over fifty libraries, and to health agencies, newspapers, and other community groups.

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The professor was released full-time to prepare the lectures, a task which proved formidable. Each weekly presentation, which included Quackery, Self-diagnosis, Preventative Medicine, Syphilis and Gonorrhea, Environmental Health, Cancer, Heart Disease, Arthritis and Exercise, Cigarettes and Health, Nutrition and Obesity, Mental Health, Mental Illness, Drug Abuse, and Smoking and Dental Health, was undertaken as a gigantic research project.

The response to the course proved overwhelming. By the end of the first week of the semester, enrollment had exceeded 2,000 students. Over 1,400 textbooks were sold by the student bookstores in community colleges throughout Southern California. In addition, KABC-TV estimated that 32,000 adults viewed the program each week from as far away as 200 miles. College administrators felt that the largest part of this response resulted from the fine promotion given to the course through the TV station. Five to six one-minute spot announcements were aired each day for a three-week period prior to and at the beginning of the course.

An evaluation questionnaire was administered to all students at the time of the final examination to obtain their reactions to the course. This was done in the hope that this experiment in open-circuit college credit instruction could yield some objective results concerning the characteristics of the students enrolled and the potentials and drawbacks of such education. The findings offer important implications for television instruction in community colleges in the future. Eighty-eight per cent of these students had taken previous college courses, but only 8% had previously taken a television course. One enlightening statistic was that 88% of the respondents indicated that they would take another television course and 71% of this group indicated that they found no marked difference between television instruction and regular classroom instruction.

It was also interesting to note that over 72% of all adults who completed the course were over 30 years of age. Only one out of ten was under 21, which leads to the conclusion that open-circuit television reaches an entirely different segment of the population than the typical junior college classroom. Almost half of the enrollees completed the course, which fact compares favorably with regular on-campus instruction and offers further encouragement for this type of instructional program.

Other interesting comments regarding this program revealed that television offered the important factor of convenience for students who could not reach the campus. Many adults stated that the use of charts, graphs, film and other instructional clarification by visual aids was especially helpful in completing the course. A large number of the adults indicated that guest speakers were not particularly helpful in the instructional program inasmuch as these discussions tended to deviate from the course content. Another important conclusion was that the students developed a growing attachment for the instructor which probably coincides with the same type of relationship that develops in a regular classroom instructional program.

Other interestings findings revealed that one out of ten students who completed the course was either an elementary or a secondary teacher, three out of ten were homemakers, twenty-four out of one hundred were in full-time employment, and seven out of ten were married.

These findings indicate that open-circuit television offers a great potential for community college instructional programs. Preliminary evidence drawn from this offering by Long Beach City College verifies that students who enrolled in this program have also enrolled in college on-campus classes.

This fact validates the findings of the Chicago junior college television courses which revealed that television did not decrease the enrollment on campus but did supplement that instruction as well as reach an entirely new segment of the population. There was further evidence of this at Long Beach City College in that there was no noticeable effect on enrollment of on-campus health education classes which could be attributed to the television course. The lack of affect on enrollment was verified by administrators in other junior colleges in Los Angeles County.

In addition to these research findings, there were many observations made by individuals directly involved in the production at Long Beach City College, and these observations confirm that there are both values and difficulties in producing an open-circuit television credit course.

One primary value that seemed to be agreed upon was that the health education course was a more effective one than that typically taught on a campus simply because it was presented over TV. One main element leading to this effectiveness was the use which could be made of visuals. For example, a close-up could be shown of a model heart so that all students could have a front row view. Other visuals in the form of slides, charts, models, objects, and professional art work aided understanding and increased interest. The TV medium also facilitated using only selective portions of films, a procedure rarely employed in the classroom. This meant that the instructor would present only the most valuable part of a film that related directly to the topic and subject under discussion. Also, because the material was presented over open-circuit television and attracted such a large audience, the professor felt a great responsibility to present only up-to-date, thoroughly researched material organized in as creative a fashion as he was able to invent.

However, the nature of the television medium also presented problems for constructing the course. Because television is so visually oriented, a professor sitting and talking for any more than five minutes readily loses his audience. This put an extra burden on the instructor to find or sometimes contrive and construct an average of forty visuals per program. Typical problems arose in previewing and scheduling film arrivals necessitating last minute changes and a flurry of phone calls so that programs could be taped on schedule. Since all materials shown on television need copyright clearance, major changes often had to be made in the script when some visual could not be cleared.

The nature of the medium also led to some re-education of the professor in terms of his methods of presentation. In the classroom, it is advantageous to move about and look at all students, but for TV, an instructor must remain fairly stationary so that he does not walk off the set, and he must maintain his eye contact with the camera lens. Unlike the classroom lesson, the television program had to be fairly carefully scripted so that the director would know exactly when to show the various visuals. This meant that the instructor was required to predetermine his entire presentation and was not able to make major deviations from his outline. Because of the structure of open-circuit television, timing caused problems in that it was essential that programs end exactly on time. This meant all material had to be carefully timed, and a buffer of material prepared for the end of the program in case there was time to be filled.

The facilities of the studio somewhat formed the course content, too, for at various times equipment needed wasn't available, and the script had to be rewritten to accommodate the equipment. But despite these difficulties, the professor and others involved felt the course was superior to what could have been presented in the classroom because of the nature of the TV medium.

Another value of the television course was that it offered education to those who could not otherwise attain it, mainly housewives with small children. Students were required to come to Long Beach only for the final, but did all work at their homes. The educational value extended not only to those enrolled for credit but to the wide audience who watched because of general interest. Letters received revealed that many people wanted more TV courses, and some letters even stated that the course had changed someone's life.

On the other side of the coin, there was a fairly high degree of student insecurity because students did not have direct contact with the instructor. Letters indicated that they were unsure about their assignments even though these were outlined in the syllabus, and they were worried about studying for the final. As a result of this feedback, all students were sent a letter giving further explanations about the course, an over-the-air practice midterm was presented, and audio tapes were made of each program and placed in the college library so students could hear lectures they missed or ones they wanted to review.

Another asset of the course was that it led to involvement of many people and hence increased their awareness of the merits of television. Other community college health instructors were consulted, the county audio-visual center offered help and advice, various health organizations such as the Heart Association, American Cancer Society, and public health department were consulted, and, of course, many people at the studio and at Long Beach City College were involved. The programs seemed to have a particularly strong morale boosting effect on the classified staff of the college, who felt they were involved in an important and revolutionary community service undertaking.

Morale of the crew members of the studio also increased for they seemed to feel they were involved with something significant and they developed an increasing interest in health as the tapings progressed.

The degree of involvement also led to difficulties, though, for with so many people supplying input, the instructor found it impossible to satisfy them all. He could still be talking to health instructors about whether he should use a medical or social approach to health, but at some point Professor Rulon had to stop listening to the ideas of others and make his own decisions. In addition, many areas of health are controversial, and various groups or individuals objected to the treatment given such topics as smoking, quackery, and flouridation.

Reaction of other faculty members to the production of the course was mixed. Some were extremely enthusiastic and saw values in TV and as a result became interested in the closed-circuit television system being established on campus. Other instructors expressed the traditional apprehension of loss of teacher jobs to television.

The programs also had great value to the whole Long Beach Unified School District mainly in terms of public relations. The college and district received publicity in connection with the course, especially the KABC-TV promotional advertising time valued at over $200,000. Many people became aware of the college who were not aware of it previously, and as mentioned earlier, some students who took the course over TV planned to enroll at Long Beach City College or their local junior college to complete their education. In addition, the district now has videotapes of the programs and can use them for in-service teacher training, direct teaching, or supplementary teaching.

The series also caused the district headaches, most of them financial and legal. First indications were that the district would obtain state reimbursement for each student enrolled on the basis of average daily attendance, but this was ruled out at the state level, and the district had to handle the whole bill which amounted to approximately $11,000. Most of this went toward released time for people involved in the course and insurance programs. The legal problems involved with drawing up a contract with the studio through the assistance of the Los Angeles County Counsel, arranging for the instructor to join the television artists union, paying residuals for a summer rerun, and negotiating to obtain videotapes of the programs were at times staggering.

One of the greatest values of the course was the enormous experience it afforded all concerned. There was room for creativity, and the instructor, particularly, readily recognized that it was necessary to develop goals and objectives for the course that were attuned to the entire community, to organize new methods of instruction that would fit the television media, and to develop new evaluative devices for the student. There was also an interchange of ideas and attitudes between studio personnel and school personnel which led to a broadening appreciation of each other's problems and methods of operation.

The course entailed more work than anyone had anticipated, but in retrospect, the energy put forth seemed worthwhile in terms of the values gained.

The overall results of the course, both objective and subjective, indicate that it proved a most worthwhile experience. Granted there were difficulties, but these are to be expected with innovation and should certainly not deter other institutions from venturing into the world of TV credit courses.